

Same Message - Different Times, Resurrection Sunday Service, April 12th, 2009 – John 20:1-18

- After seeking the Lord about this Resurrection Sunday, the Holy Spirit has impressed upon my heart that today needs to be different.
- The message is the same, but the world in which we live has changed and even now is changing, so much so, it will never be as it was!
- It seems we've crossed a line, or rounded a corner, and there's no looking back, or turning back, we have passed the point of no return.

- I believe that this Resurrection Sunday so different because of the intensity and the urgency of the desperate times in which we live.
- At the risk of sounding provocative and hyper-sensational; we are on the brink of disaster the likes of which man has never before seen.
- This world is doomed and damned as it heads for sudden destruction at breakneck speed and there's nothing you and I can do about it.

- Now, having said that; let me hasten to say this; "while you and I can do nothing, there is One Who could and did do everything for us!"
- I'm speaking of the person of Jesus Christ. It is for this very reason we find ourselves here on this day we call Resurrection Sunday.
- Jesus was born to die, but rose from the grave defeating death and saving those who would believe in Him from eternal damnation.

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

John 3:16-18 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. NKJV

- Does this mean that only those who believe in Jesus Christ will be saved? Yes!

Acts 4:12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." NIV

- So what about Mohammad, Confucius, or Buddha? They're dead!

"The bones of Muhammad are in Medina, the bones of Confucius are in Shantung, the cremated bones of Buddha are in Nepal. Thousands pay pilgrimages to worship at their tombs which contain their bones. But in Jerusalem there is a cave cut into the rock. This is the tomb of Jesus. IT IS EMPTY! YES, EMPTY! BECAUSE HE IS RISEN! He died, physically and historically. He arose from the dead, and now sits at the right hand of God."

Sir Lionel Alfred Luckhoo

- Levi, my eight year old, was once asked by a Buddhist neighbor; "isn't Easter about Jesus dying on the cross?"
- My son replied; "no, Easter is not about Jesus dying on the cross, it's about Jesus rising from the dead three days later!"

- Maybe to you, Easter is about Jesus dying on the cross, and Christmas is about Jesus being born in a manger. That's what it's about.
- So, since that's what it's all about, you decide that on Christmas and Easter, you'll go to church and celebrate the holidays.
- Well, to tell you the truth, you can go to church on Christmas and Easter, and still go to hell!

"If I'm at your house and I began to move from room to room straightening pictures on your wall, that's commendable, but if your house is on fire, and I began to move from room to room straightening pictures, I've become evil, and wicked not choosing to use my time to save your life."

Corrie Ten Boom

- Instead of neatly straightening the pictures of our Christian lives, I've chosen to use my time today to talk about how we can be saved.
- See, if all of this is true, and, as God is my witness, it is, then the only way for anyone to be saved and go to heaven is through Jesus.
- There is no other way for anyone to be saved from eternity in hell unless they believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and their Savior!

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. NIV

- Why is Jesus the only way, the only truth, and the only life? Because He is the only One Who rose from the dead as truth to give us life!
- This is why resurrection Sunday is so important. What we believe about and do with Christ's resurrection is a matter of life and death!
- Now, the Discovery Channel would disagree with what I have just said. They would have you to believe that the resurrection is a hoax.

"Dr. Greenleaf, the Royal Professor of Law at Harvard University, believed the Resurrection was a hoax and was determined to expose the "myth." After thoroughly examining the evidence he came to the exact opposite conclusion and wrote a book entitled, *The Testimony of the Four Evangelists by the Rules of Evidence*. He concluded that according to the jurisdiction of legal evidence the resurrection was the best supported event in all of history and in the process committed his life to Jesus Christ!"

Charles Spurgeon - "... beyond a doubt it can be shown that there is as much evidence for the resurrection of Christ as for any fact in history. There is, probably, no fact in history which is so fully proven and corroborated as the fact that Jesus of Nazareth, who was nailed to the cross, and died, and was buried, did rise again."

Peter W. Stoner "...Any man who rejects Christ as the Son of God is rejecting a fact proved perhaps more absolutely than any other fact in the world."

http://www.geocities.com/stonerdon/science_speaks.html

Billy Graham - "There is more evidence that Jesus rose from the dead than there is that Julius Caesar ever lived or that Alexander the Great died at the age of 33."

- So does that mean that the "lost tomb of Jesus" that the Discovery Channel took their TV cameras to and found is a hoax? Absolutely!
- Last November, 17 of us from this fellowship, had the privilege of going to the "found tomb of Jesus," located at a place called "Calvary."

- In 1842 Otto Thenius proposed that a location known as the "place of the skull" was the Calvary (Golgotha) where the crucifixion of Jesus occurred.
- In 1878 Captain Conder, stated his conviction that the real site of Calvary was to be found on a rocky knoll outside the northern wall and close to the cave known as "Jeremiah's Grotto."
- In 1894 a British General named Gordon visited this spot and had a very strong sense about it being the place, so much so that he had to research it further.
- Later he would come to believe with a certainty that this was the site where Jesus was buried and rose from the dead. He began raising money and established the Garden Tomb Association in London, which purchased the land and still manages the site and maintains the grounds to this day.
- Soil samples were taken from the floor of the tomb and given to expert chemists to determine if there had been any trace of decomposition. The analysis was completed, and it was concluded that absolutely no trace whatsoever of any decay or decomposition was found.
- Today, Sunday Services are held at this site, and visitors come from all over the world to see this tomb which had belonged to one Joseph of Arimathea, who was used of God to fulfill the prophecies related to the burial and subsequent resurrection of the Messiah.

- Let's here the eyewitnesses account of what really took place on that resurrection Sunday almost 2,000 years ago there at Calvary.

John 20:1-18 1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2 So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" 3 So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7 as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. **The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen.** 8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. 9 (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) 10 Then the disciples went back to their homes, 11 but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12 and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. 13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." 14 At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. 15 "Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her. NIV

- Why would John, by the Holy Spirit, deem it necessary to include the detail of how Jesus' burial cloth was folded and neatly set aside?

- It's interesting that the burial cloth placed over Jesus' face was not, like the other linen, thrown aside, but folded neatly and set aside.
- One has to conclude that there was both an importance in and significance for, Jesus folding this burial cloth after his resurrection.
- In order to understand the significance of this, one has to know a little bit about a well known Hebrew tradition of Jesus' day.

- According to this tradition, the servant would perfectly prepare the table for his master exactly the way the master wanted it.
- The servant would wait until the master had finished eating, and he wouldn't dare touch the table until the master was finished.
- When the master finished, he rose from the table, wiped his fingers mouth and beard, then wadded up that cloth and tossed it aside.

- The servant would then know to clear the table. For in those days, the wadded cloth meant, 'I'm done'.
- However, if the master got up from the table, folded his napkin, and laid it beside his plate, the servant wouldn't dare touch anything.
- The reason for this is because the folded cloth meant, 'I'm coming back!' Could Jesus have been saying; "I'm coming back?"

- The resurrection account doesn't end with the resurrection of Jesus the resurrection of Jesus means we can expect the return of Jesus!

The last verse in the last book of the Bible -Revelation 22:20-21 20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. KJV

- So, in other words, if I don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus and the return of Jesus, I am sent to hell for all eternity by Jesus? No!
- It's been said that "when Jesus died on the cross, He was saying to you and me; 'over my dead and resurrected body you go to hell!'"

John 11:25-26 ..."I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

- One might say; "well I don't believe there is a hell, let alone that hell is forever!" Consider what Jesus Himself said about hell:

Mark 9:43-44 43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. KJV

- Ok, now you're scaring the hell out of me! I don't want to go to hell! Good, Jesus doesn't want you to go to hell either!

2 Peter 3:9b He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. NIV

- So how do you get saved and come to repentance so you don't perish in hell for all eternity? I'm so glad you asked!

Romans 3:10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned-

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 10:9-10 ...if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Romans 10:13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."